

GPC Governing Board
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2021

Via hybrid live & Zoom conference call: Rev. Dr. Douglas Cederberg, Dennis Christo, Kim Paré, David Raphael, Charles Whittall, Richard Grayson, Robert Converse

Guests: Russell Vickstrom, Ken White, & Nancy White

This Zoom conference meeting commenced at 6:33 p.m.

Rev Doug offered a prayer of gratefulness for this day and the work He does among us and the people who serve each other in faith. Amen.

VOTE: The GB meeting minutes from 5/11/21 had been previously distributed and reviewed. Bob moved to approve the minutes as written. Dave seconded. Unanimously approved. No opposition and no abstentions.

The financial report was given by Charlie Whittall. We're running low on funds, less than \$2k in the bank. Berkshire bank, as a corporation really dropped the ball on this one as they held the documentation for two months and it was never processed. We haven't heard back about what they need for additional documentation for the second attempt of PPP. Charlie will resubmit to SBIA. He suggested taking funds from the investment fund to cover the bills. Bob added that it looks like we're under where we were from last month's pledges and donations as well.

Karen Allen had shared a pledge report which showed we're down \$30k from this time last year. The total was \$93k in pledges and we're only at \$64k in pledges this year. Charlie and Karen said some are giving but didn't pledge as that number is higher. The non-pledged amount last year was higher than expected. So, people haven't pledged but are giving. At our June meeting, the board may need to authorize a withdrawal from the Investment account.

Nancy asked if we've received any money from the Athol Y yet. They will send something by July once they get youth signed up. So, \$5,400. in funds should be forthcoming for the summer session.

Russa asked about the value of the endowment fund. Last time he looked at it, it was approximately \$780k. Since the investments have done well, Russ suggested taking another \$16k as that's what it's there for. While it's preferable not to use it, that's exactly the reason it exists. Dennis said the congregation approved and agreed to support the budget. The question is how to be mindful of this looming deficit and covering the difference. Russ said people need to hear the situation.

The next agenda item was about Selah use by the UMass Memorial Group. They want to know how much to pay and whom to pay. Dick said he found a fee schedule from 1999. Nancy said there used to be one posted on the wall at Selah. Dennis said Marion did a complete record check and couldn't find anything about fees to use Selah. Nancy referenced a comprehensive one from recent time. Doug said they're waiting to pay. We agreed the use of Selah by UMass but we hadn't confirmed a fee. They need an invoice. Charlie will create an invoice on GPC letterhead.

Nancy said the fee was \$5/pp day use and \$25/pp per night with capacity of 5 ppl per cabin. Dennis said they had 10 ppl staying over in 2 cabins and 28 ppl for the daylong seminar on 5/18. \$25/cabin nightly. By calculation, \$190. was the total and any additional donation would be appreciated. Russ referred the GB to check out the Selah website.

Protocols for requesting camp/trailer/cottage site reservations and obtaining keys once a deposit is completed. Karen is in the office every Monday. Marion volunteered for Tuesdays and she's also checking the phone. Bob & Betsy Converse will be in on Wednesdays and Thursdays. No one has volunteered for Fridays.

There was a discussion about using the calendar to record reservations. There is no request form for Selah with the statement to call the church office. Russ said there's a button that says, book here now. We used to have a comprehensive calendar that showed Food Hub, church activities, and Selah reservations. From a systems point of view, people can reserve and hold the space for Facilities approval.

Charlie said Karen cleaned up the Google calendar on Monday. Dennis said we need to continue working with Karen and Carolina to affirm the calendar use. Nancy said after making the space/reservation request, people then state what they need. It's possible to run this process solely online much like an Airbnb.

Dennis said we're paying for phone service but it's not ringing in the lodge. The phone line got knocked down a couple years ago. Ken said a telephone pole snapped and Verizon never came back to re-establish it. Russ added that we moved to WiFi due to the loss of the landline. We shouldn't have been paying the \$37/month. The internet is \$130/month. Dave said he doesn't ever remember voting to terminate the landline. The landline was originally only for outgoing, local emergencies. \$780/month (seasonally 6 months) for the WiFi versus \$444/month for a landline. Dave said the WiFi was automatically turned on for the season 5/1-10/31. There was a brief discussion about long distance versus local charges. Charlie will find out the specifics on Thursday when he meets Verizon there. Dick said the phone should be reinstated for emergencies. Ken White said the WiFi is necessary for cell phone connectivity. Kim added that the landline will be necessary to ensure the physical address of an emergency locator whereas a cell may not help navigate safety personnel to the emergency. The GB agrees that for the summer season of 2022, the Y needs to pay for the WiFi if they need it for their seasonal rental. Dave said he and Bob called Charter Spectrum in the fall 2020 to ensure the seasonal hold. There was no bill all winter but Nancy said it was still working.

VOTE: Dave moved to maintain the landline phone at Selah. Kim seconded. All unanimously in favor. No abstentions. No discussion.

VOTE: Dave made a motion to continue the WiFi for this spring/summer season and to hold the service off season. Bob seconded. All unanimously in favor. No abstentions. No discussion.

The next agenda item is the in-person and simultaneous, virtual live recorded service. It was hard to hear when Doug moved away from the microphone. He wants something that will work for his preaching not him adapting to the technical equipment. Usually, the person who operates the sound system manages those challenges. Russ added that before he left the GB, we spent \$750 on a new microphone system. It is mechanized to be self-operated. Ken said there's tremendous feedback when the microphones are too close. Dennis said Carolina is working with whomever to work with volunteers to perfect this system.

Kim had shared the Mass.gov guidance as of May 17th regarding the mask requirement, social distancing, seating arrangements, 50% occupancy. The deacons don't think the call ahead

reservations and the temperature taking are necessary. Continue using prepackaged communion and single tray collections. Singing has not been allowed as of this writing.

Dick said the Facility Use Team (FUT) met on 5/17. The guidelines were discussed regarding building usage: Food Hub using the kitchen, only one Cub Scout Troop has another week at GPC then breaks for the summer, current GPC groups and future GPC groups using the facilities, and the Y using Camp Selah. The FUT suggested that the GB affirm these 5 exceptions. CANA and WIMS have not responded to phone calls. Deb Richards will write some protocols to follow for future group use. They meet again on 6/7. The FUT spent their time talking about where are we going? We need to determine the direction of GPC. This brings the question about use of GPC by Studio Theatre Worcester. They are not on the list of groups sanctioned to currently use GPC.

Dennis said the president of STW wants to resume their theatre production at GPC. We're not prepared at this time to allow them to use the building. Russ said this is a new professional theatre group since Worcester Foothills Theatre closed. They approached GPC through Russ due to his younger son being the Community Outreach director. A typical show was 2 weeks and GPOC would take the dress rehearsal money. They produced 3 shows and the 4th was expected to run the day GPC closed due to the pandemic. Rev Kev was going to do 2 talk backs after the Doubt show related to the content of a priest being accused of inappropriate interaction with a youth in their congregation. STW receives money from a grant to prepare the set and stage the production. The state is going to lift capacity for shows and productions. STW is asking to be able to complete this parable, in the sanctuary, when the state approves these gatherings. The building has to be more than the Sunday morning worship, including a community center through community access. Will we host them when it's time (September production) or no we cannot rekindle this relationship?

Dennis thanked Russ for this background and the clarification of STW's request. We're never going to be the GPC of yesteryear. The valley of reality is in recognizing where we are. Until we can clarify how to get out of the valley, should be do what is wishful or what is practical/essential. Russ asked about whether we allow a one-off production, with an existing entity we've had a three-year relationship with, in support of community interaction or limit access altogether.

Doug said Rev Kev did a wonderful job as an intentional minister but there are as many questions unanswered as there are ones defined. The more we add on to what we're doing, the more distracted we become from what we need to address. Dick said there's been a lot of push back for the plays when the choir had to move offstage. There's a fairly strong feeling from some, including him, about the show disrespecting a sacred space such as a sanctuary. He walked out of the first show he saw due to the inappropriate language. Dennis said his focus is on the work that needs to be done: 3 fundamental questions as to, "what is our future?" STW takes energy away from the course of action we need to take for our immediate future. There are only a few people who are managing all of the things that need to get done. We should be limiting how many endeavors we focus on. Bob agreed with the FUT consensus. Kim said it should be held in Fisher Hall than the sanctuary. Charlie agreed.

VOTE: Dave made a motion to sever the relationship with Studio Theatre Worcester. Bob seconded. No further discussion. Majority in favor. Kim was against. No abstentions.

Russ asked who was going to send a letter regarding this information. Dennis will send a letter with the GB decision to the STW president regarding severing our relationship with them.

VOTE: Dave made a motion to accept the minutes of the Facility Use Team with their recommendations of the 5 exceptions noted for GPC property. Bob seconded. Nancy said Selah has always been a sanctuary for GPC members to use. Dick said that is not being disallowed. Dick said a letter should be drafted for all other entities that previously used GPC. Dave said part of Shon Rainford's deal is to be able to run Serve Safe certification classes as part of his Food Hub rental. No further discussion. Majority in favor. Charlie was opposed. No abstentions.

Doug said he met with the Mission Implementation Team (MIT) and will meet again tomorrow night for bimonthly meetings. The challenge is going to be how to narrow our focus and what do we need to let go of as well as who's going to do it. New things may come out of MIT. Carolina is trying to get people to do FaceBook Live and there's not enough people to do the critical things given the resources we have.

Fran Langille had a sent a request to the GB for Post Road Chorus to use the side yard for rehearsal. Her request has been withdrawn as they found an alternative indoor space to use.

In the past, the summer was a few people singing together. Annie is looking to rustle up a few choir singers to support her in the next few months. Dave said we need to wait and see what the guidance is from the state regarding singing in closed venues.

Dave said we haven't received the keys from the Boy Scouts. Dennis will communicate with John Atlas. The urinal in the men's room off Fisher Hall was repaired this afternoon. There's a person that died and left us some property in Holden. We haven't received any notice from an attorney regarding the will or the bequest.

Doug said attendance at the 8:30 varies between 12-17 people. He has no problems continuing the two services. We should discuss moving to one service for July and August at our next meeting or over email via electronic vote. Kim suggested taking a vote tonight in order to publish the time change and the notification. Dennis agreed there's a precedent going back several pastors of this seasonal change.

VOTE: Kim made a motion to vote for a single 9:30 summer service. Dave seconded. Unanimously in favor. No opposition. No abstentions. Dennis will publish this notification that beginning July 4th through September 5th, there will be a single service at 9:30 in the sanctuary.

New business: Bob said Carlo has started the garden. Ken asked if the air conditioning has been turned on yet. No one seemed to know.

Dave made a motion to adjourn. Dick seconded. Unanimous agreement. The meeting ended at 8:44 p.m.

The next Governing Board is a regular GB Zoom meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Paré, Clerk